

**The Potomac Lower School**  
**McLean, Virginia**  
**Institutional Architecture**

**Program**

The Potomac School is an Independent School in an expansive park-like setting in Northern Virginia. The academic buildings are arranged into two separate but linked campuses – the Lower/Middle School (Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade) and the Upper School (9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade). As part of a Campus expansion, the aging Lower School was replaced with a new, 43,000 sf building that acts as a symbolic gateway for young students beginning their school journey.

**Design Solution**

The new Lower School is a one-story home for Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. It is first encountered as planes of fieldstone and glass walls stretched along a green hillside. Low rooflines and continuous, exposed concrete base walls form a horizontal framework for vertically divided glass and stucco wall panels. Opposing, pitched roofs provide a dynamic counterpart to the long lines.

Environmental stewardship is introduced to the youngest students with the new building. Classroom wings are organized around courtyard play spaces that preserve towering oak and holly trees and give all thirteen classrooms a strong visual and physical connection to the outdoors. Small porches at each classroom connect to the courtyards and to adjacent meadows and nature trails. Sloped roofs direct water run-off to rain chains and into rain barrels for use in irrigation. A series of indoor and outdoor social gathering and learning spaces - built-in window seats for story telling, a central gathering space with a salt-water aquarium, a science deck overlooking the meadow – extend through the Lower School to support and reinforce the School's mission.



- KEY**
- 1. **NEW LOWER SCHOOL**
  - 2. MIDDLE SCHOOL
  - 3. FUTURE ADMINISTRATION BLDG
  - 4. PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
  - 5. BUS SQUARE
  - 6. CAMPUS ENTRANCE
  - 7. PIMMIT RUN
  - 8. UPPER SCHOOL
  - 9. GYM
  - 10. FUTURE FIELD HOUSE
  - 11. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD
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-  New Structures
  -  Existing Structures
  -  Future Structures
  -  Existing Nature Trails

CAMPUS SITE PLAN



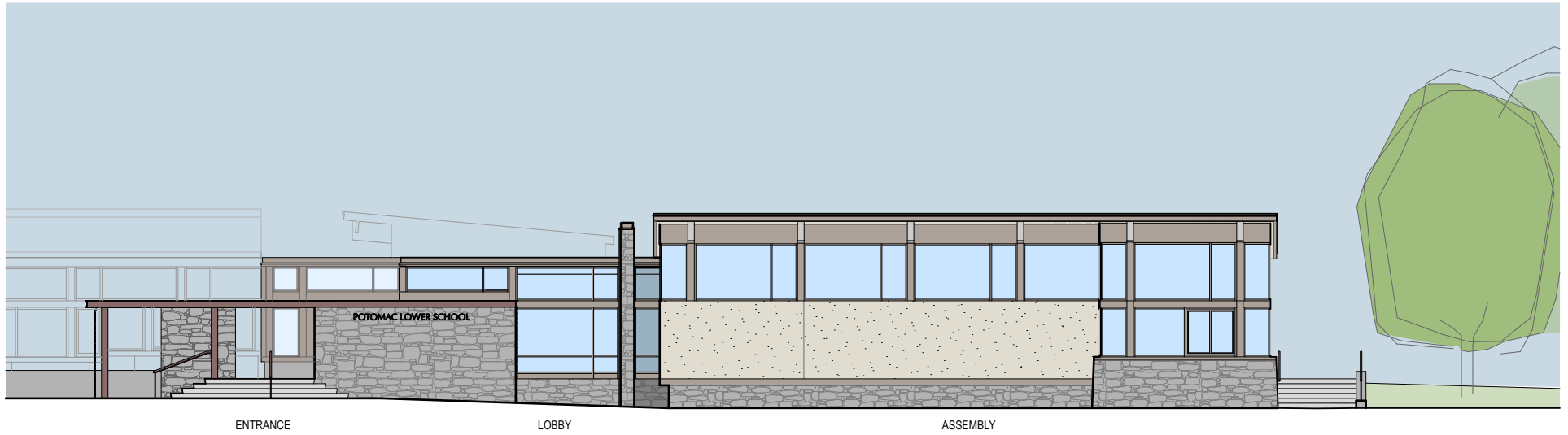


# KEY

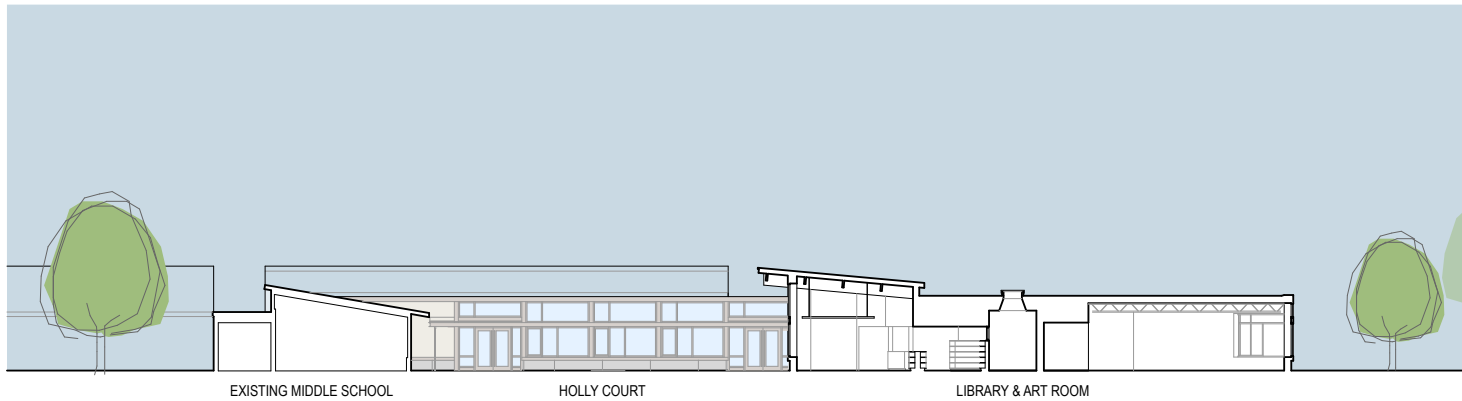
- K. KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM
- 1. 1ST GRADE CLASSROOM
- 2. 2ND GRADE CLASSROOM
- 3. 3RD GRADE CLASSROOM
- 4. ART ROOM
- 5. MUSIC ROOM
- 6. SCIENCE CLASSROOM

FLOOR PLAN



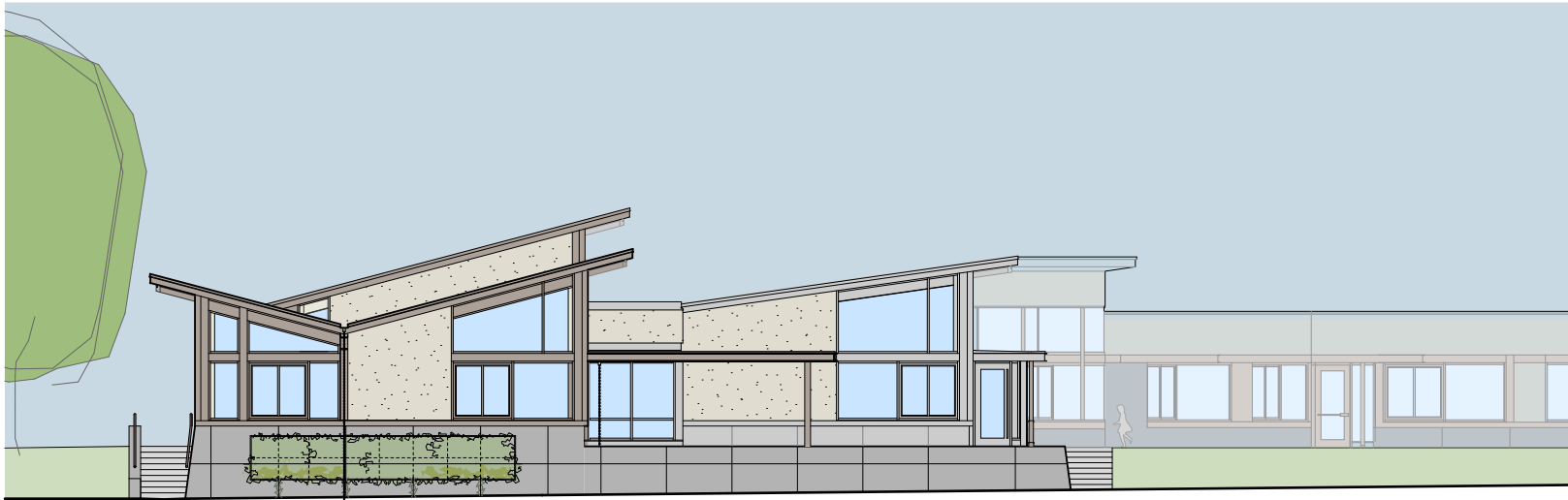


EAST ELEVATION 1 - ASSEMBLY WING



SECTION A



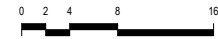


SCIENCE CLASSROOM

1ST GRADE CLASSROOM (BEYOND)

LOWER SCHOOL COURT

## WEST ELEVATION 2 - SCIENCE CLASSROOM



KINDERGARTEN & FIRST GRADE WING

LOWER SCHOOL COURT

SECOND & THIRD GRADE WING

MIDDLE SCHOOL COURT

EXISTING MIDDLE SCHOOL

## SECTION B







EAST ELEVATION - LOWER SCHOOL ENTRANCE





SOUTH ELEVATION - ENTRANCE WITH LIBRARY BEYOND



EAST ELEVATION - ASSEMBLY





SOUTH ELEVATION - LIBRARY AT HOLLY COURT





LIBRARY



EAST ELEVATION - WINDOW BAY AT HOLLY COURT  
CONNECTION CORRIDOR BETWEEN LOWER SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL





NORTH ELEVATION - LOWER SCHOOL COURTYARD  
LOOKING SOUTH TOWARD 2ND / 3RD GRADE WING





WEST ELEVATION - LOWER SCHOOL COURT



NORTH ELEVATION - ASSEMBLY WING  
KINDERGARTEN / 1ST GRADE WING BEYOND





WEST ELEVATION SCIENCE CLASSROOM AND SCIENCE DECK  
WITH SAND AND WATER PLAY AREA BELOW





WEST ELEVATION - SCIENCE CLASSROOM



NORTH ELEVATION - LOWER SCHOOL COURTYARD  
LOOKING NORTH TOWARD 1ST / 2ND GRADE WING



SCIENCE CLASSROOM





EAST ELEVATION - LOWER SCHOOL ENTRANCE





EAST ELEVATION DETAIL - ENTRANCE LOBBY AND ASSEMBLY